
1.0 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

The NPS proposes to improve and enhance JPP, located in the southeastern corner of the City of Alexandria, Virginia. The project includes recreational features, an interpretive plan related to cultural resources, and proposed modifications to parking and access within the park. The elevated WWB traverses JPP. The FHWA has approved improvements to the WWB and affected interchanges within a 7½-mile portion of the Capital Beltway (I-95/I-495). The proposed improvements to JPP are mitigation commitments to the NPS from FHWA for impacts to the park from the WWB Replacement Project.

The NPS signed the initial JPP EA on September 10, 2001. Terrorists attacked on September 11, 2001 crashing commercial airplanes into the World Trade Center in New York City, the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., and a field in Pennsylvania. The initial EA, which evaluated three action alternatives: Alternatives 1, 2 and 3, was circulated for public comment between January 11, 2002 and February 11, 2002. In August 2003, the federal TSA performed a vulnerability assessment and recommended the removal of all parking from beneath the new WWB. After careful evaluation of the risks of parking in JPP, a recommendation was set forth to eliminate all parking and vehicular access within 80 feet of the north and south parapet driplines of the new WWB. There could be an exception for special events if the predefined security measures have been put in place for vehicle inspection assuring safety of the bridge structure.

TSA's recommendation, endorsed by the FHWA and accepted by the MSHA, the VDOT, the City of Alexandria, and the NPS (owner of JPP) has resulted in the need to reassess the parking, access, and security components of the park design. This EA evaluates four action alternatives that address parking, access, and security issues in JPP.

The need for the proposed action is based on:

- The lack of a current comprehensive management plan for JPP.
- Required mitigation commitments for impacts from the WWB Replacement Project (protection of JPP resources and recreational opportunities).
- Required security measures in JPP due to recommendations contained within the *Vulnerability Reduction Design Considerations for the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Replacement Project* (June 2002).

The primary purposes of the proposed action are to:

- Develop a long-range plan for JPP.
- Identify desired resource conditions and visitor experiences.
- Consider feasible alternatives for future development of JPP.
- Provide educational and recreational opportunities for visitors while protecting park resources.

This EA analyzes the potential impacts resulting from the construction of new parking areas, turnaround and access roads, recreational improvements, and perimeter barriers that are proposed in JPP. Jones Point Park Drive was closed to public use in May 2006 due to demolition of the existing WWB. The construction contracts for JPP parking, access, and security improvements are anticipated to be awarded in summer 2007 with vehicular access reinstated in JPP by the end of 2007. The construction of the park improvements is not likely to begin until the second WWB span is completed in 2008. The access to the southern portion of the JPP would remain open at all times.

This EA has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, the regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) for implementing the Act (40 CFR 1500-1508), the NPS Director's Order 12 (*Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision-making*, 2001), and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended.

2.0 BACKGROUND

A. JPP Description

JPP is an approximately 65-acre park located in the southeastern corner of the City of Alexandria that is owned by the NPS under the jurisdiction of the George Washington Memorial Parkway. JPP contains many recreational amenities such as multi-use fields, natural areas, a finishing pier (used for fishing activities), historic resources, pedestrian trails, and bike paths (Figure 1). A *Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)/Section 4(f) Evaluation* in 1997 and a *Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS)/Section 4(f) Evaluation* in 2000 fully documented studies of the WWB Replacement Project, including JPP.

An approximately 10-acre parcel of land that contains the WWB is within JPP (Figure 2). This land is owned by the United States and is under the jurisdiction of the FHWA (formerly Bureau of Public Roads). The FHWA granted an easement encompassing approximately 9 acres of land to the VDOT for the purpose of maintaining the existing WWB until the bridge is replaced. Although FHWA permitted free use of this land as a public convenience for parking and access from Royal Street, the land under and around the existing WWB has never been owned by a park agency, designated as a park, or used for recreational purposes. Therefore, FHWA's land under and around the WWB is not eligible for Section 4(f) consideration.

To facilitate construction and maintenance of the new WWB, the FHWA conveyed approximately 10 acres of land under their jurisdiction to the NPS for park and recreational uses. The result of this conveyance increased the size of JPP to an approximate total of 65 acres and consolidated three discontinuous areas of JPP under the sole jurisdiction of the NPS. However, VDOT maintained a perpetual easement that is approximately 5 acres larger than the current bridge easement (Figure 3). To compensate for the larger permanent easement under and around the new bridge, the FHWA would improve and enhance this portion of JPP so that the area would be useable and functional parkland suitable for recreational uses not currently available.